

will pass the Transportation appropriations bill.

But we need to work on issues that are important to this country. Last week a report came out dealing with Social Security and what needed to be done. One of the main directions of that report is for the President's commission to do an analysis of Social Security. Most everyone said the people had a preconceived idea before they were appointed, and that is to privatize Social Security. We have heard from a lot of people that such a plan would require a 41 percent cut in benefits in order to maintain Social Security solvency, according to an October 2000 Century Foundation analysis by the country's leading economists. It is very unlikely that private accounts would earn enough to dig out of the hole. Average single earners would still face 20 percent cuts, with married couples and lower earners doing even worse. So there are a lot of issues that we are being forced to talk about by the administration.

I think it is important we take a look at Social Security to see what we can do to build it up in the outyears, but for people saying Social Security is a disaster, it is broke, simply isn't true. Everyone will draw 100 percent of the benefits until almost the year 2040. And if we did nothing with Social Security prior to 2040—and I certainly hope we will not—people would still be able to draw 80 percent of their benefits. They should be able to draw 100 percent of the benefits.

I think that another direction we are getting from the White House is not appropriate, and that is talking about Social Security being bankrupt. It is not. We need to take a look and do some things so in the outyears it is going to be strong and everybody can draw 100 percent of their benefits, not just 80 percent of the benefits. We also look forward to having the committee chairmen work hard on having hearings so that we can report out as many of the President's nominations as we can. I personally think that the process isn't good; it takes so long. There is a huge hole at the end, and all these nominations are stuffed in this hole. At the other end, where they come out down, it is about this big. It is a very tiny little hole. It is a funnel that has a small end on it. What happens is we do not have the opportunity in a timely fashion to look at these people. They go through the Justice Department, vetted by the White House, and outside entities take a look at them. It has become so burdensome that even an independent analysis says the quickest President Bush can have all his nominees in place will be next February. That is really too slow, and we are going to do our best to process these nominees as fairly and expeditiously as possible.

Mr. President, I would hope that we are allowed to go to the Emergency Ag-

riculture Assistance Act of 2001. It is very important legislation for almost the entire country—I shouldn't say almost the entire country. It is important for the whole country. Title I deals with commodities, and these commodities are things that we take for granted. When we go to the grocery stores, these things are always there. Farmers have difficulty year after year doing what needs to be done. This is an emergency supplemental. As we have heard on this floor from Senators from different parts of the country, if their farmers don't get relief, they will, in effect, go bankrupt. That is why we need to do this as quickly as possible.

Title II is very important. It deals with conservation. There is a new part of the bill that has received a lot of direction and attention. The conservation aspect of this bill is important because we are looking at things we haven't done in the past, such as wetlands reserve programs and conservation reserve programs. So I would hope that Senators HARKIN and LUGAR, who will be the managers of this legislation, are allowed to go forward with this bill as quickly as possible.

It is too bad we are going to have a cloture vote on the motion to proceed, but that is what we have been asked to do.

Title III deals with nutrition, which is a substantial part of this program. It requires a Farmers' Market Nutrition Pilot Program, distribution of commodities, things that again we take for granted. So I hope that we move to title IV dealing with credit and rural development, which is certainly something that Nevada cares about; title V dealing with research; and title VI, disaster assistance, we can move as quickly as possible.

We understand there will be a number of amendments. We hope that we could move to these amendments quickly and not have to face another cloture motion on the bill itself. I think all we are doing is holding up legislation that is vital to the very existence of the family farm. We have heard time and time again how important family farms are to America. This legislation will preserve thousands of family farms that are in desperate shape at this time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I thank the Chair. I ask unanimous consent that I may proceed as if in morning business. I understand 30 minutes has been allocated to Senator GRASSLEY. I would ask unanimous consent that since Senator GRASSLEY has indicated he cannot be here at this time, 20 minutes of the 30 minutes be allocated to me and the balance remaining, approximately 10 min-

utes, to Senator CRAIG THOMAS of Wyoming.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, would it be permissible to the Senator that Democrats still have 5 minutes at the end of his time?

I ask unanimous consent that we have the last 5 minutes.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Will the Senator repeat the request.

Mr. REID. Yes. I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Alaska have 20 minutes, Senator GRASSLEY 10 minutes, and the Democrats would have the last 5 minutes.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I believe Senator REID misunderstood me. This was Senator GRASSLEY's time. Senator THOMAS wanted the remaining 10 minutes. I have no objection to providing the last 5 minutes to the other side.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alaska, Mr. MURKOWSKI.

ENERGY CRISIS

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I very much appreciate the senior Member of this body, the President pro tempore, who is presiding at this time, for giving me the opportunity to advise my colleagues of the seriousness of the energy crisis in this country. I think we would all agree that the matter of energy is something we take a good deal for granted. We take for granted that America has been blessed with an affordable, plentiful, reliable supply of energy which pretty much provides us with a standard of living second to none. But it is something, again, that is there. We take it for granted. And we look forward to it continuing.

We have had some attention given to the crisis out in California, but for the most part it has not hit the majority of Americans. I think it is fair to say from the following information we have seen there is a growing concern that perhaps what happened in California could spread to other parts of the country.

As far as our national security is concerned, we have had a lot of discussion; we have seen communiqués; we have seen articles concerning the national security of our country tied into energy simply because we have increased our imports of crude oil into this country from about 37 percent in 1973 to over 56 percent at this time.

As a consequence, we have become more beholden to OPEC and, the OPEC cartel, and the OPEC cartel has set a price structure of \$22 to \$28 and reduced supply. It is pretty much assumed now we are going to be in a period of increased dependence on imported oil from OPEC in the Middle